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Prologue

Um I never added a prologue so let's pretend this was always here oKay

it's not gonna be a long prologue but you'll live

A dark brown tabby and a tortoiseshell cat with a red tail stood glaring at each other, their fur bristling. The dark brown tabby opened his jaws to speak first as his razor-sharp claws dug into the earth, which was now softened by the rain.

"I can't let you be deputy, Redtail!" He hissed, his amber eyes burning into the tortoiseshell's pelt. "This is for the future of ThunderClan!" A flash of lightning brightened the sky as a roar of thunder followed.

The tortoiseshell got ready to leap at the warrior, even though they were of the same Clan. He knew he would break the Warrior Code by doing so, but he might have to kill the warrior to protect the other cats. "Tigerclaw, I can't let you do this. Listen to me, I'm the deputy of our Clan. If we leave without any more injuries, we can go home and never speak of this again."

"I can't trust you, Redtail. I need to become deputy. I need to become leader of this pitiful Clan and rule the whole forest!"

Tigerclaw sprang at the tortoiseshell warrior, knocking him off his paws onto the ground. He raised a paw, his claws unsheathed. "Do you think that will happen if you become leader?" He growled. "No, because you're weak. You would never be able to rule a Clan like I would!"

Redtail refused to speak; he was afraid he'd lose the argument. He kicked Tigerclaw backward a few tail lengths with his powerful hind legs and pinned him down. Tigerclaw bared his teeth as he

spoke. "You think you can kill me, Redtail? Do you think you can even hurt me?" Tigerclaw hissed as he struggled to loosen himself from the other cat's grip.

The brown tabby gave Redtail an intimidating look before freeing his paws and clawing at his enemy's chest. Tigerclaw leaped up, pinning the other warrior down, just as what Redtail did to him. He lifted his unsheathed paw and ripped at the tortoiseshell's throat. "Tigerclaw, why did you do this?" Redtail choked. "You'll never rule the Clan..."

As Redtail collapsed onto the ground, Tigerclaw rose to his paws and circled around the dying deputy. Redtail's eyes glazed over as his breathing grew shallow and came to a stop. His blood was washing away into the soil to never be seen again. Another bolt of lightning lit up the sky and a loud boom of thunder followed shortly after. Tigerclaw heard a rustle in the leaves as he picked up Redtail's body and dragged it back to camp. "Just watch me."

Chapter One

[image]

An orange house cat wandered through a dark forest. He sensed no other cat, no prey, no nothing. The forest seemed as if were completely abandoned. His paws led him to a barren clearing, where only a small wisp of moonlight shone its brilliant light upon. A deep voice could be heard from a distance, but no cat was in sight, nor could the kittypet smell another cat. It seemed to be chanting something, he just couldn't make out what.

"Hello..?" The house cat murmured, his voice trembling. "Is anyone there..?"

His fur was standing on end. His legs were shaking. What was this place? Everything went blank and he suddenly he awoke in a soft, cozy bed. "Rusty, come get your breakfast!" He heard his housefolk call.

It was just a dream, Rusty thought to himself. *Nothing more.*

Rusty stood up, stretching his legs in the warmth of the sunlight that filtered in through the window. He heard his stomach growl, and padded over to his food bowl. *This tastes horrible!* Thought Rusty as he gnawed at the dry bits of food that had been given to him. He blinked his eyes wearily and stumbled over to the door to get let outside. Maybe he could find some prey, which was way better than whatever his housefolk had been giving him.

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"So that's what you dreamed about?" Asked Rusty's friend, Smudge, after Rusty explained his dream. Smudge was a black and white kitten, who was also a house cat.

"Yup," replied Rusty as he munched on a mouse. " It was pretty weird, Smudge"

"It was probably nothing," Smudge mewed in reply. "After all, it's just a dream."

"I suppose you're right. A dream's just a dream."

Smudge nodded in agreement. After an awkward pause, Smudge decided to break the silence. "You know about those wild cats that live in the forest over there?" Smudge flicked his tail over toward a dense forest, filled with all sorts of animals and bugs and plants.

"Oh, er, no," Rusty meowed as he finished his mouse and licked his lips. "I had no idea, but it's probably some old tale"

"It's not an old tale, Rusty, it's true. I promise!"

"Yeah, yeah. I don't believe you for one second. How about this: I go into the forest and see if those 'wild cats' you're talking about are real, okay?"

"B-but they'll surely kill you! Or take you off to join them! They could make you a slave... or something!"

"But they're not, because they're not real. I'll go looking for a mouse or a vole or something, and if they're real, they'll find me. If they aren't, then I'll come back here with whatever I find, and you can eat it. Deal?"

" Deal. "

Chapter Two

[image]

Rusty raced over to the fence that surrounded his nest. It was incredibly tall compared to the small cat, but he wasn't going to give up so easily. He padded backward a few steps to get a running start. Rusty dashed toward the fence, took a great leap, and landed right on top of the wall.

"See that?" Boasted Rusty. " I landed right on top of the fence!"

"Yeah, yeah," groaned Smudge sarcastically, his voice a little shaky. "Now go get killed. I-I mean stay safe, and don't let those mangy forest cats hurt you!"

Rusty glared at his friend. "They're not real! I'll bring you back a mouse or something!"

Rusty leaped from the fence into the dense forest that lay ahead. The grass was thick, and it felt soothing on his paw pads. He lifted his muzzle in the air, opening his jaws to look for a scent. He caught a smell: *vole,* thought Rusty. *There's a vole somewhere around here...*

The orange kitten wandered through the forest, trying to find the source of the scent. Suddenly, he heard a rattling sound in the bush. Rusty looked around, but saw nobody. He scented something not too far from him though, and it overpowered the scent of the vole. "Show yourself!" He hissed.

The rattling stopped. "Coward!" Spat Rusty. "Show yourself, I said!"

All of a sudden, he heard a yowl and Rusty was sprawled out on the ground. He felt a strong blow to his back, knocking the wind out of him. Rusty turned around onto his back, and battered his paws at his attacker. He caught a glimpse of whoever decided to attack him; it was a dark brown tabby.

Rusty kicked the cat with his hind legs a few tail lengths away. Three other cats stepped out from the bushes: a pale tabby tom with black stripes, a muscular, dark brown tabby tom with striking amber eyes, and a gray tom with black stripes. The gray cat spoke up first.

"You did well for your first warrior assessment, Dustpaw," he mewed, his yellow eyes gleaming with pride. "I wouldn't expect any less from my apprentice."

The large tabby tom looked at Dustpaw. "If Redtail were still your mentor, you wouldn't be as strong as you are now!"

The large tabby's gaze flickered over to Rusty. "What are you doing here, kittypet?"

"I-I'm sorry? Since when is this *your* land?" Asked Rusy, an edge to his high pitched voice.

"What do you mean? This is *ThunderClan* territory! Not *kittypet* territory!"

"And what are you gonna do about it, huh?"

The pale tabby stepped in. "He'll rip you to shreds and lay your entrails from here all the way to RiverClan territory!" He sneered in a nasally voice.

"Come with us, kittypet," meowed the large brown tabby. "We'll find out what your punishment should be back in camp. Take your collar off, too. It's going to alert all the prey. We can't go back empty pawed."

"But I don't know how to," stammered Rusty. "My housefolk make me wear it all the time."

"Once a kittypet, always a kittypet," muttered the gray cat under his breath.

The big brown tabby looked back over at the gray cat. "You got that right, Darkstripe. Now come on, let's take this kit back to camp."

Chapter Three

[image]

"Welcome to ThunderClan," muttered the large brown tabby. "Let me go and get my leader. "

The tom padded off to a rock on the other side of the clearing. *So I guess the wild cats are real and Smudge was right,* Rusty thought to himself. The large tabby returned with a blue-gray she-cat, who Rusty assumed was the leader. "What is it this time, Tigerclaw?" She muttered.

"There was a kittypet on ThunderClan territory, Bluestar," he replied calmly.

"Ah, I see," she replied. The she-cat began to sniff Rusty, as if he were some sort of foreign object. "Darkstripe, Longtail, Dustpaw, go find something to do," she meowed at the other three cats, and they headed off to the other side of the camp.

"What's your name?" She asked bluntly.

"Oh, er, I'm..." Rusty didn't want them to know that he was originally a house cat. He tried to think of something that made him sound tough.

"Well?"

The she-cat sounded impatient. *What makes me sound tough? Well, I have orange fur, so what's orange?* Rusty couldn't think. "My name's, er... Fire! My name is Fire!"

"Fire?" The she-cat asked.

"C-correct!"

"Fire is your name?"

"Um, yeah!"

"You seem quite unsure, are you positive?" She was squinting her eyes at Rusty now. Why was she so suspicious?

"Bluestar, calm down! That seems to be his name!" The brown tabby exclaimed.

"What were you doing in ThunderClan territory, *Fire?"* Asked the she-cat

"I wasn't paying attention to territory, and I er... "

"Stay with your twolegs next time! This is no place for a kit to be!"

Does she think I'm weak? Rusty thought, anger surging inside of him. "But I don't have...Twolegs!" He lied. *What even are twolegs? Are they like housefolk?*

"But just in the forest, you said that your housefolk, whatever that is, make you wear that collar!" Interrupted the big brown tabby.

"They *did.* They don't anymore." Rusty puffed up his chest.

"Why not?" The she-cat asked, taking a step forward.

"Because... Because I killed them!" Rusty mewed as he bared his teeth.

The big brown tabby chuckled. "I think I'm starting to like this one..."

The she cat ignored the comment. "You're far too small to kill any twoleg. You're just a kit!"

"W-well I did!" Rusty stammered. "I killed them!"

"Well then you'll have to prove yourself," the she-cat murmured.

"But Bluestar, how could he prove himself?" The big brown tabby asked.

"By fighting one of my warriors, and *winning,"* she replied sternly. "You see, Tigerclaw, I want him to prove himself strong enough to be in *my* Clan."

"B-but—" the she-cat hushed the brown tabby with her tail.

"Silence, Tigerclaw."

I guess that the brown tabby is Tigerclaw*, and the gray she-cat is* Bluestar... Rusty thought as he listened in on their conversation.

"Longtail!" Bluestar called.

Almost instantly, the pale tabby that Rusty had seen in the forest appeared before her, dipping his head in respect. "Yes, Bluestar, what would you like?"

I'm guessing that he's Longtail...

"I would like you to battle Fire..." Bluestar flicked her tail over to Rusty.

Tigerclaw interrupted them. "But Longtail's a fully grown warrior!"

Bluestar exchanged a disapproving glare with Tigerclaw, and turned back to Longtail.

"Do you think that you'll be able to do that?"

"Oh yeah, definitely!" Longtail bared his teeth into a menacing smile.

I'm going to get killed, just like Smudge said!

Longtail made his way over to Rusty, his claws unsheathed. "Well?"

Rusty took a big gulp. Was this the last thing he'll ever do, or will he win the fight? He took a few steps back, and got ready to pounce as he unsheathed his claws to battle. Suddenly, Rusty got thrown to the ground by a strong blow in his side, knocking the

breath out of him. He lay there still for a while.

The rest of the Clan began slowly gathering around, and Rusty heard whispers like small gusts of wind around him. "Is that all you got?" He heard Longtail sneer.

Rusty wasn't going to give up that easily. He struggled to his legs, and looked the pale tabby in the eye. "Not even close!"

He leaped onto Longtail's side, sending him to the ground. While his soft underbelly was exposed, he dug his claws into the flesh, breaking skin and causing blood to well up around the injury. For a moment Rusty had felt like he won...

...But he was far from winning.

Chapter Four

[image]

"Spottedleaf, get over here!" Bluestar hissed. Rusty heard whispers from the Clan grow louder, and they seemed to dilute into one voice.

A beautiful tortoiseshell she-cat came striding over from a small den. Her scent was sweet and her fur was sleek and elegant. "What happened here?" She asked, her smooth voice ringing in Rusty's ears.

"Meet Fire," Bluestar told Spottedleaf. Spottedleaf mouthed words to Bluestar, but Rusty couldn't make out what she was trying to telling her.

"Greetings, Fire," Spottedleaf mewed as she turned her head around to face the orange cat.

"He injured Longtail while trying to prove that he could kill his old twolegs," Bluestar explained. "He did more damage than I expected."

"It's not a very bad injury, but certainly worse than I'd expect from a kit his size," agreed Spottedleaf.

"But he hasn't proven himself yet," Bluestar added. "Did you have a group you hung around with?" She turned her head to face Rusty.

Rusty turned to look at the she-cat. Her icy gaze seemed to be burning into his skull. "I had a friend, a black and white cat. He lives with twolegs now, *the coward*." Rusty tried to make it seem like he hated twolegs. After all, he didn't want them to think he was weak.

Spottedleaf began to lead Longtail back to her den, allowing him

to lean on her shoulder for support. "Don't worry, I'll get you some cobwebs, poppy seeds, whatever you're going to need to heal up."

Longtail had looked at her reluctantly, but followed. The rest of the Clan broke up and found places around the camp to gossip with the others. Tigerclaw went too, but farther away from the other cats to talk to Darkstripe.

"I see... I'd like to meet this friend of yours," Bluestar told Rusty. "Bring him here."

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The sun was beginning to set, and Rusty finally convinced Smudge to go with him into the forest.

"See, *I* was right!" Smudge boasted as his voice gradually grew more and more shaky and nervous.

"Yeah, and you'll meet all the cats..."

The two arrived at the camp, and both of them were equally nervous. "Remember, Smudge. I'm Fire, and you can stay Smudge. I killed my housefolk, who they call twolegs, and now I'm a loner. I met you, but you want back with twolegs."

"Er, okay," Smudge mewed as he nodded his understanding.

Bluestar and Tigerclaw padded up to them. "Look who it is!" Tigerclaw announced. "Fire and... Whoever he brought with him!"

Bluestar sniffed Smudge just as she had sniffed Rusty when they first met. "Who are you? Where did you come from?"

Smudge looked as if he were about to break down right then and there, but he answered calmly. "M-my name is Smudge, and I used to be Ru— I mean *Fire's* friend. I-I eventually went off to live with twolegs, be-because I got too weak."

" I see, I see... " Bluestar muttered. "This was your friend, Fire?"

"Yes, he was."

"You know, I still don't believe that you killed your twolegs."

"Why not?"

Bluestar chuckled at Rusty. "Because, look at you! You're a kit, barely old enough to be an apprentice! "

"So?"

"So, you're lying. You managed to do some damage to Longtail, but that's nothing a bit of warrior training can't fix. "

"Y-you want me to join your Clan?"

"It's the only way you can get stronger, " Bluestar replied. "Your friend here can join too. I'm not usually this lenient when it comes to letting random cats join my Clan. We have warrior blood running through our veins, and we can't lose it by taking in every cat we find."

Rusty exchanged nervous glances with Smudge. "We'll join."

Chapter Five

[image]

"All cats old enough to catch their own prey, please gather beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting!" Bluestar cried as she clambered onto a rock on the other side of camp, which seemed to also be a den.

The cats of the Clan began to slowly migrate toward the rock as the setting sun cast a warm red glow on the camp. Rusty and Smudge decided to follow along with the Clan, and sat in the clearing along with them.

"Today," Bluestar began, "a young cat named Fire was found on ThunderClan territory. He claimed to have escaped his twolegs and didn't notice the borders. Fire, please come forward."

The Clan and Smudge backed away as Rusty stepped forward. He felt the stares of the other cats burn into his pelt. Whispers and meows stirred around him.

Bluestar waited for the commotion to die down before she continued. "You said you wanted to be a part of this Clan, correct?" She asked, her cold blue gaze focused on the orange cat, who still had his blue collar on.

"Yes I did," Rusty replied calmly.

"Very well. In that case, it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Firepaw. Your mentor will be Tigerclaw. I hope Tigerclaw will pass all he knows on to you."

Firepaw nodded and flashed a glance over to Tigerclaw, who had been looking over at him.

Bluestar then turned her head to face Tigerclaw. Tigerclaw sat up, correcting his posture. "Tigerclaw," Bluestar started, "You have been a warrior for quite some time now, and your courage and strength couldn't make me more honored to have you in my Clan. You have received excellent training from Thistleclaw, and you have proven yourself worthy of an apprentice."

Tigerclaw nodded, his eyes glittering with passion.

"You will be the mentor of Firepaw, and I expect you to pass on all you know to him."

"Yes, Bluestar," Tigerclaw meowed as he padded over to Firepaw.

Tigerclaw reached out his muzzle to touch noses with his new apprentice. "Firepaw! Firepaw!" The Clan cheered. "Firepaw! Firepaw!"

Tigerclaw looked at his new apprentice's collar. "We're going to have to get rid of that collar, you know," he whispered into Firepaw's ear.

"There is another cat too," Bluestar mewed as the cheering calmed down and Firepaw went back to his spot. Her eyes switched over to look at Smudge, who was too still wearing his collar. The rest of the Clan began murmuring again and turned to look at Smudge, who seemed to be shaking with both fear and excitement.

"Smudge, please step forward."

The black and white cat slowly made his way forward to face Bluestar. With each nervous pawstep, his collar bell dinged quietly. His paws trembled as he tilted his head upward to fix his gaze on the she-cat once more.

Bluestar looked down at Smudge and smirked. "You were Firepaw's friend before you started to live with twolegs, correct?"

Angry hisses following the word "twolegs" could be heard from the crowd. "Y-yes," replied Smudge.

"And you would like to join my Clan? Is that correct also?"

"Y-yes, that is c-correct."

"Well then, Smudge, from this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as... "Bluestar came to a sudden pause. "From this day on, you will be known as Splashpaw. Your mentor will be me. I will be sure to pass down all I know onto you."

Bluestar leaped down from her rock to touch noses with her new apprentice. Splashpaw looked as if he were about to topple over he was shaking so bad, but he stood his ground. Loud cheering grew over the Clan. "Splashpaw! Splashpaw!"

Firepaw noticed that the Clan seemed to be more excited about his friend joining ThunderClan. He felt a seed of envy being planted into him, and he knew he had to train even harder than Splashpaw to become the best warrior the forest has ever seen.